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IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Appl. No.

09/749,284

Confirmation No. 5815

Applicant

Gene R. Anderson et al

Filed

December 26, 2000

TC/A.U.

2877

Examiner

Juan D. Valentin

Docket No.

1613370-0005

Customer No.:

007470

Commissioner for Patents P.O. Box 1450 Arlington, VA 22313-1450

PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT

Sir:

The Applicants respectfully request the Examiner to enter the following amendment and to consider the following remarks:

Amendments to the Claims are reflected in the listing of claims which begin on page 2 of this paper.

Remarks/Arguments begin on page 16 of this paper.

Express Mail Certificate of Mailing

I hereby certify that this paper is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as Express Mail No. ER 535430429 US in an envelope addressed to: Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Arlington, VA 22313-1450, on May 24, 2004.

Christina Ishihara

Name

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May 24, 2004

Date